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CARTHAGINIAN AND BRITISH MERCENARIES
COMPARED.

A SERMON,

PREACHED IN THE

PARISH CHURCH OF ST. MARY ABBOTS,
KENSINGTON,

ON

The Day of National Humiliation and Prayer.

BY THE

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ARCHDEACON OF MIDDLESEX,

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P R E F A C E.

THE following sermon, having been written in the country on very short notice, was not intended for publication ; but since it has attracted much more attention than the Author anticipated, he has been induced to comply with the request of many who desired to see it printed in a permanent form.

From the reports given by the daily press of sermons preached on the Day of Humiliation, it is evident that many of the Clergy have most ably and forcibly dwelt upon those sins, both of omission and commission, which may be considered as having called down upon us the Divine displeasure. The Author has preferred directing the attention of his hearers to the general want of judgment and foresight, to which, as he conceives, our present national disasters may be distinctly traced. He is apprehensive that, notwithstanding all the evils which have come upon us, we shall not apply the proper remedies, unless we are persuaded to consider, as a

nation, whether we have not been, to a large extent, the cause of our own calamities ; whether we have not discouraged and put to silence those who were endeavouring, however feebly, to point out the critical position of our Eastern dominion ; and whether our indifference, and carelessness, and false security have not contributed to prevent our rulers, both in India and at home, from adopting those measures of precaution which they too well knew, that we should strenuously resist as unnecessary and expensive.

The Indian Mutiny has only as yet lasted four months. A similar mutiny, to which reference is made in the following pages, was protracted to nearly three years and a half. God forbid that so long a period of intense anxiety and misery should be necessary to prevent us from relapsing into the indolent, parsimonious, and impracticable temper, to which we immediately gave way, when Providence delivered us from the disasters of the Crimea !

Vicarage, Kensington,
October 9, 1857.

Λ

SERMON,

&c.

JUDGES xviii. 7.

“Then the five men departed, and came to Laish, and saw the people that were therein, how they dwelt careless, after the manner of the Zidonians, quiet and secure.”

TYRE and Zidon, in respect of wealth, commerce, manufactures, and general civilization, were among the most celebrated cities of the ancient world. Their *merchants were princes, and their traffickers the honourable of the earth*¹. Their commerce extended over the whole of the Mediterranean, and even reached the Peninsula of India. The inhabitants were Phenicians, and both cities were occasionally united under one government.

The thriving town of Laish (the Cæsarea Philippi of the New Testament) was a colony of Zidon, situated towards the north of Canaan². The

¹ Isa. xxiii. 8.

² See Grotius and Rosenmüller.

citizens are described as dwelling *careless, after the manner of the Zidonians, quiet and secure*. Their policy, it would appear, was not aggressive. They were a peaceably-disposed community. They did not maintain a military force, nor had they erected walls or bastions for their defence. They relied for safety on their inoffensiveness, and on the influence and reputation, the "prestige," as we should term it, of Zidon, their mother city. This was a blind and, as it proved, a fatal confidence; but if any of the citizens had remonstrated against it, there would, no doubt, be a party in the city, calling themselves especially the friends of peace, who would overrule these remonstrances. This party would be prepared to say, "While it is notorious that we desire to injure no one, no one, we may be sure, will desire to injure us. The great provocative of war is a large military establishment. If we surround ourselves with ramparts, we shall betray suspicion of our neighbours, and dispose them to attack us. The true way to gain favour, is to show a friendly confidence. An army, also, is a costly luxury; the taxes necessary to maintain it would press heavily upon the industry of the people. It will be soon enough for us to enter on the question of national defences, when we see some enemy preparing to assail us."

Arguments such as these were popular at Laish; they were voted to be sound, convincing, and unanswerable: but they soon received a fearful

refutation. The spies, of whom we read in our text, reported to the children of Dan the defenceless condition of this prosperous community. The Danites were encouraged to attack it. They came upon it by surprise. And, as we are informed in the twenty-eighth verse, *there was no deliverer, because it was far from Zidon. And they smote the people with the edge of the sword, and burnt the city with fire.* I have assumed that a minority of the citizens must have disapproved of the suicidal policy of the majority; but they did not on that account escape. The people, as a community, had acted foolishly and recklessly, and they were all involved in one common ruin.

Such was the end of Laish: such is the warning it affords us against false security. I have now to add, that the Phenicians had another far more important colony, whose eventful history suggests a warning still more impressively appropriate to the present emergency. I refer to Carthage, which rose to a greater height of power and opulence than either Tyre or Zidon, and was able even to contend with Rome for the mastery of the world. The Carthaginians extended their commerce beyond the coasts of the Mediterranean; they are even said to have visited Britain, and to have exported the produce of the tin and copper mines of our south-western shores. To facilitate commercial intercourse, it was the custom of this enterprising people to obtain possession, either by purchase or

by conquest, of the most convenient sea-ports of the countries with which they traded, as, for instance, Gades in Spain, Calaris in Sardinia, and Agrigentum in Sicily. They next took occasion to quarrel with the neighbouring petty states and kingdoms, and either imposed a tribute upon them, or annexed the disputed territory. Their next step was to levy soldiers among the tributary or subject population. These mercenaries were aliens in blood, in language, in manners, and religion, but they were commanded by Carthaginian officers; and, as a precaution against mutiny, care was taken to enlist recruits of various tribes and creeds³. According to the historian, Carthage drew from Numidia a bold and indefatigable cavalry; from the Balearic isles the most expert slingers in the world; from Spain a stout and invincible infantry; from the coasts of Genoa and Gaul troops of approved valour; and from Greece itself, soldiers fit for all the various operations of war; for the field or for the garrison, for besieging or defending cities.

The advantages of this policy are thus explained:—"The Carthaginians," says the historian, "sent out powerful armies, without depopulating either their fields or cities by new levies; without suspending their manufactures, or disturbing the peaceable artificer; without interrupting their commerce, or weakening their navy. By mer-

³ See Polyb. lib. i.

cenary blood they possessed themselves of provinces and kingdoms, and made other nations the instruments of their grandeur and glory, with no other expense of their own than their money, and even this furnished by their traffic with foreign nations."

Such, my brethren, was the military system of Carthage. It led almost of necessity to continued extensions of territory. The governors of provinces availed themselves of every opportunity to annex a neighbouring town or district; and these annexations, by whatever means obtained, were sure to be approved of by the home government.

But in the policy of this generally sagacious people there was one great error, which brought their republic to the very brink of ruin. They had too much confidence in their mercenaries, and took no adequate precautions against mutiny. While they increased their foreign armies by cohort after cohort, and legion after legion, they made no corresponding addition to the native Carthaginian force intended to overawe them. And, in an evil hour, under the pressure of extreme financial difficulties, they disbanded a portion of them, without paying them their full arrears, and without adopting any of the measures which common sense suggested to prevent an outbreak: *they dwelt careless and secure after the manner of the Zidonians.*

A mutiny broke out. The most furious soldiers, it is stated, took the lead, and began by murdering

all their comrades who refused to join them. They next seized their commanders, and subjected even the most popular among them to the most cruel indignities. The infection spread to the tributary towns, all of which, with two exceptions, joined in the revolt. News reached the Carthaginians, that while their general, Hanno, was unsuspectingly diverting himself at Utica, he was surprised by the mutineers; his camp taken and plundered, and his whole army dispersed. Then followed atrocities only to be paralleled by recent tales of horror. I confine myself to two examples. In Sardinia the mutineers murdered one general, crucified another, and put all the Carthaginians throughout the island, of either sex, and of all ages, to the sword, after inflicting on them unutterable torments. In Africa they brought 700 Carthaginian prisoners in front of the camp, cut off their hands, broke their thighs, and tossed their mangled, but still breathing, bodies into a ditch.

I shall not attempt to describe the war that followed. Suffice it to say, the conflict lasted three years and four months. Carthage was more than once reduced to extremities of peril. At length order was restored; and the mutineers were either slaughtered or reduced to obedience. The contemporary Greek historian, Polybius, terms the war "inexpiable," "the most savage and lawless that he had ever heard of." He remarks, that "the misfortunes of the Carthaginians most clearly

show, what far-seeing care and caution must be used by those who employ mercenary forces, and also how great the difference is between the morals of a barbarous and heterogeneous crowd, and those of an army educated under the laws and institutions of a civilized community⁴.”

These and other comments of Polybius are thus summed up by an eminent French historian. “According to Polybius,” says Rollin, “this war furnished a great lesson to all nations,—not to employ in their armies a greater number of mercenaries than of citizens; nor to rely for the defence of their state on a body of men who are not attached to it, either by interest or affection⁵.”

These events in ancient history, my brethren, have a striking application to our own times, and to ourselves. We, the people of Great Britain, having imitated the carelessness of the Zidonians, have been subjected in consequence to great misfortunes, and to us the warnings apply which any sensible Phenician would have addressed to his fellow-countrymen of Laish or of Carthage.

In the acquisition of our vast Indian empire, how closely, though unconsciously, have we followed, step by step, the example of the Carthaginians! We obtain permission to erect factories upon the sea-coasts of Hindostan; we surround these factories

⁴ Polyb. lib. i. c. 5.

⁵ “Elle fournit une grande instruction à tous les peuples,” &c. Rollin, tome i. p. 266.

with ramparts; we quarrel with the neighbouring Rajahs and Nabobs; we take possession of their territories; we enlist the bravest of the conquered tribes as a mercenary army; by means of these mercenaries we achieve splendid victories; we annex province after province, and kingdom after kingdom, to our dominions, until about 180 millions of people acknowledge our supremacy; and, lastly, we continually augment our Sepoy army without proportionally increasing the British forces, which are our only safeguard against mutiny. All these particulars form a wonderful modern counterpart, on a great scale, to the system of the Carthaginians. In our policy, however, there are many errors to which the history of the Phenician republic affords no parallel. We do not read that the Carthaginians ever fortified the ancient capital of the Numidians, the Spaniards, or any other conquered and disaffected people, surrounded it with ramparts and bastions, collected in it an enormous treasure, stored it with an inexhaustible supply of spears and arrows, swords and javelins, catapultæ and ballistæ, and then left it without a single Carthaginian cohort for its protection. We do not find that the Carthaginians, having once seen the wisdom of enlisting soldiers of all creeds, and languages, and races, to form a heterogeneous army, with no bond of union but their oath of fidelity to Carthage, afterwards repudiated that wise policy, and recruited their most numerous army almost entirely from two

classes, the most discontented and impracticable of the whole subject population. It does not appear that the Carthaginians ever allowed the disaffected priests and teachers of subject nations to spread abroad systematically the most atrocious calumnies against the Carthaginian republic, and to hold up its most distinguished officers and citizens to general execration, and especially to the contempt and hatred of its own alien soldiery. We do not read that the Carthaginians ever tried to civilize their barbarous subjects by teaching them Phenician art and science, without instructing them in any principles of morals, or in any form of religious belief. We do not find that the Carthaginians, having drawn a large portion of their soldiers from the dominions of a tributary sovereign, proceeded afterwards to depose him, and to annex his territories, without suspecting the possibility that those soldiers could have any dangerous sympathy with the de-throned monarch and his fallen dynasty. And further, we do not read that the Carthaginians ever adopted into their military system any implement of war to which their mercenaries on religious grounds objected; and then, on the refusal of the Spaniards or Numidians to make use of that obnoxious weapon, instead of respecting their conscientious scruples, condemned them to labour for ten years in irons.

I have the less hesitation in adverting to these our lamentable errors, because the false security I

complain of is common to the whole British nation : to our fellow-countrymen in the East : to our statesmen and legislators of all parties at home ; and to ourselves ; for certainly if any of us had sense enough to perceive that we were imitating the recklessness of the Zidonians, our remonstrances against the general infatuation were miserably feeble and ineffective. Another reason why I have adverted freely to our mistakes is, that if we had committed no mistakes, if we had not been chargeable with carelessness and false security, if we had been doing all that human foresight could suggest for the preservation of our empire in the East, our case would have been desperate. We should have been unable to devise a remedy. But we have committed grievous errors : and it is from the correction of those errors that our hopes of success must under God arise. The more obvious our indiscretion in past times, the more easily shall we avoid repeating it in future.

Let us now proceed from our mistakes, to the disasters which have resulted from them. A few months ago we enjoyed peaceable possession of a mighty empire, acquired by the wisdom and valour of our ancestors—an empire which, considering its distance, its extent, and its population, is probably the most wonderful dominion that any nation, ancient or modern, was ever privileged to acquire. We had sanguine hopes of being chosen instruments in the hand of God for civilizing and evange-

lizing the 180 millions of human beings under our sway. We were preparing to make improvements of every kind, physical, social, and religious; to drain marshes, to construct roads, to cut down forests, to build bridges, to form canals and reservoirs; to deepen rivers, to irrigate valleys, and to clear the passes over mountains. We were sending out missionaries, projecting new bishoprics, and founding schools and colleges. Suddenly our progress is arrested. Our brilliant prospects vanish. We had been dwelling carelessly. We had neglected to take any measures for our own security. We had presumptuously imposed that burden upon Providence: but Providence will not protect either nations or individuals that will not protect themselves. The mighty army on whose fidelity we trusted, conspires against us. Regiment after regiment murders its own officers, and plunders our treasuries. Our mercenaries rival those of Carthage in treachery and ferocity. Men, women, and children, officers and civilians, missionaries and their Christian converts, are all indiscriminately massacred. And a cry is raised from the Ganges to the Indus, that not a single European must be permitted to survive.

It cannot be denied that these consequences of our folly and improvidence are as disheartening as they were unlooked for. At the same time, let us not forget the many cheering circumstances with which they are accompanied:—the heroism, the

magnanimity, the more than Roman fortitude, the Christian firmness and resignation, which, by God's blessing, our fellow-countrymen in the East have been enabled to evince. When I read of our feeble bands of British soldiers,—feeble in numbers, but strong in resolution,—discomfiting a host of enemies, armed with our own weapons, and initiated into our own discipline; and not only fighting bravely, but enduring cheerfully, under a tropical sun, toils and privations, marches and counter-marches, of which the natives of the land are hardly capable:—when I read of striplings, only sixteen or seventeen years of age, and tenderly brought up, advancing to the charge with all the coolness and hardihood of veterans:—families reduced at one blow from comfort and affluence to utter destitution, and yet in all their sufferings and perils thanking God, that though their property was gone, their lives and Christian hopes remained:—women retaining self-possession in the most agitating vicissitudes of hope and fear, and when all earthly hope had forsaken them, preferring death to dishonour:—when I read such details, I rejoice in the conviction that the British race has not degenerated, and that we are not yet unworthy of the pre-eminence which God has given us among the nations of the earth. “My good friend,” said an English officer, only sixteen years of age, and mortally wounded, to a Christian Catechist, formerly a Mahomedan, who, terrified by the mutineers, was about to save his life

by abjuring his new faith;—"My good friend, do not deny the Lord Jesus." The Catechist regained his courage; and declared that he would die a Christian. A moment afterwards, rescued through a wonderful coincidence from the hands of his captors, he turned to thank his juvenile monitor, but already was too late: the youth had in the meantime expired. The touching exhortation, "Deny not the Lord Jesus," had been his last dying words. How difficult, on reading such details, to refrain from tears of sympathy and admiration!

I. Among the practical suggestions to be drawn from all that I have advanced, the first is, to beware of national self-confidence. Whatever we may think or say of British valour, British enterprise, British wealth, skill, energy, and intelligence, let us not forget our dependence upon God, and that *the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men* ⁶. It is deeply interesting to observe how forcibly and unaffectedly such sentiments are expressed by our countrymen in the East, not only in public documents, but in private letters not intended for the public eye. Would to God that we could always trace the same humble piety in the speeches and writings of our orators and journalists at home!

II. Again, to national acknowledgments of our dependence upon God, let us add national exertion. We have no right to trust in Providence, if we are

⁶ Dan. iv. 17.

not true to ourselves. We have a world-wide commerce, colonies in every quarter of the globe, and an accumulation of riches sufficient to excite the envy and cupidity of all nations. Common prudence, therefore, requires that we should maintain establishments, naval and military, in proportion to our wealth and population. If we parsimoniously refuse to do so, we have no ground to hope that God will specially interpose for our preservation. And more particularly, as regards our Indian empire, let us keep in mind the "great lesson, which," as Polybius observes, "the calamities of Carthage have given to all nations, viz. what far-seeing care and caution must be used by those who employ a mercenary army."

III. In the third place, do not betray impatience or despondency because the Indian mutiny is not yet put down. Do not assume that we can never again, under any circumstances, place any confidence in a Sepoy army. Our suspense as yet has been of short duration. How dreadful the anxiety of the Carthaginians during the long period of three years and four months which elapsed before they succeeded in disarming their mercenaries and restoring order! They had time for reflection; and were therefore disposed to profit by experience. It specially deserves attention, that they did not despondingly abandon, but wisely endeavoured to reform their military system. The abilities of the great Hannibal were for years directed to that

object. He levied armies in the very countries from which the mutineers had been enlisted, but took such precautions against mutiny, that under the severest trials his soldiers remained faithful. The reforms he introduced are not fully stated. It is mentioned, however, that to provide for the security of Spain and Africa, he made the Africans serve in Spain, and the Spaniards in Africa, in order that they might be hostages for the fidelity of each other. His policy was so effectual, that he achieved a series of victories hardly to be paralleled in the annals of war. Let us not then suspect that Sepoys are incorrigibly treacherous; nor assume that if our Indian empire is to be preserved, our British army must alone undertake the impracticable task of keeping down nearly 200 millions of people. If we follow the example of the Carthaginians, avoid past errors, and thoroughly amend our military system under the direction of competent officers, we may yet find a Sepoy army as deserving of confidence as were the mercenaries of Hannibal.

IV. Another rule which I would suggest is, that on the re-establishment of our authority, we should not allow ourselves to be led away by resentment and indignation in our treatment of the mutineers, but should temper justice with mercy.

It is alleged of the Carthaginians, that on the first alarm, they gave encouragement to the mutiny by large concessions, and indiscriminate offers of

pardon; thus betraying the extremity of the distress to which their folly and improvidence had reduced them; but it is added that afterwards, when thoroughly exasperated, they endeavoured to strike terror by unsparing massacres, tortures and crucifixions'. Thus the mutineers became desperate, and the war was prolonged. At the same time it deserves notice, that no Carthaginian ever thought of burning or destroying any of the rebellious towns; not even Sicca, the head-quarters of the mutineers. To destroy Sicca would have been wantonly to destroy a valuable Carthaginian possession.

As regards ourselves, we have had our feelings so much excited and embittered by reading every day powerfully drawn descriptions of abominable atrocities, that we are in little danger of excessive lenity. And when a whole community is of one mind, it is hardly capable of viewing the question fairly. Let us therefore ask ourselves, what degree of severity would an impartial foreign nation, well acquainted with the facts, consider suitable to the occasion? Or to put the question in another form,—What penalties do we think the Carthaginians were entitled to inflict for the repression of mutiny? Their case and ours have a strong resemblance to each other; only with this difference, that excessive severity was more excusable in them than it would be in us. They were worshippers of *Ashtaroath*,

⁷ Polyb. lib. i.

the abomination of the Zidonians^s; we are disciples of Jesus Christ. They endured above three years of misery and anxiety; we have scarcely suffered so many months. Their rebel soldiers advanced to the very gates of Carthage; ours are in another hemisphere.

What I fear is, that, under the influence of strong indignation at unheard-of enormities, we shall allow our soldiers to commit some acts of terrible severity, of which we shall be afterwards ashamed; a reaction will then follow, and the real authors of the mischief, who, while speaking friendly with their mouths, conspired against us, and from their mosques, divans, and secret chambers, sent forth the bloody mandate to kill and to destroy, and not spare sex or age, may be permitted to escape not only punishment, but detection.

V. Proceeding next to the deeply interesting subject of missions, I may remark, that I do not consider the present crisis as a reason for diminishing, but rather for increasing, our missionary exertions. I do not mean that we are to send missionaries instead of soldiers to Delhi, Agra, or Benares. Our efforts in the rebellious districts to promote the religion of peace must be suspended, until order is restored. But in two of our three presidencies order has scarcely been disturbed. And it deserves notice, that in the presidency of Madras, which has especially been blessed with tranquillity, missionary

^s 2 Kings xxiii. 13.

efforts have been most successful, and Christianity has made greatest progress. I do not contend that the tranquillity of Madras is attributable to our missionaries; but if I do not insist that they have the merit of preventing mutiny in the South, I have a right to urge, on the other hand, that they have not, in any measure, the demerit of producing it in the North.

On the re-establishment of our supremacy, I do not wish that the government should declare itself hostile to the religious opinions of its 180 millions of subjects. By any declaration of that kind it would betray a want of caution worse than that of the Zidonians. Not only must it refrain from coercing its subjects in respect to their religion, but it must not even be suspected of intending to coerce them. What we desire is, that as a Christian government it should give no encouragement or countenance to false religion; that it should make full provision for the spiritual wants of its own British servants and soldiers; and that it should allow the freest scope to missionary enterprise. It will be our duty,—the duty of the Church at home, to avail ourselves of the precious opportunities thus afforded, keeping constantly in mind, that God has given us our vast Indian dominion, not that we may indulge our national vanity and ambition, but that we may enjoy the inestimable privilege of being his instruments in civilising and evangelising the East.

VI. Let me add, in conclusion, that the present crisis loudly calls for the exercise of Christian liberality. You are already painfully familiar with the calamities which have befallen our fellow-countrymen in India. You have read the heart-rending details in the columns of the daily press. You know that thousands have been reduced from affluence to utter destitution. Would you then demonstrate that you are susceptible of generous emotion? Would you show that you are able to appreciate heroic fortitude and Christian resignation? Would you show that you, the fellow-countrymen of the sufferers, are not less concerned for their distresses, than those sovereigns and citizens of foreign lands, who have generously come forward with an expression of their sympathy? Would you prove that you are not unworthy disciples of a compassionate Master, who Himself *took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses* ⁹, wept for our sufferings and died for our salvation? Would you show that you are suitably affected by the solemnities of this day of national humiliation and prayer? In short, would you act consistently? And when you supplicate your heavenly Father in behalf of the widow and the orphan, the wounded and the dying, do you wish that your *alms* should *come up for a memorial before God* in conjunction

⁹ Matt. viii. 17.

with your *prayers*¹? Then let your gift on this occasion be an adequate expression of your feelings. Let it evince the ardour of your patriotism. Let it be worthy of your Christian profession, and your Christian hopes. Let it undeniably demonstrate, that when great calamities have been nobly endured, it is not by words only and barren eulogies, but by deeds and actual sacrifices, that you desire to express your admiration.

¹ Acts x. 4.

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THE END.

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